

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 SY-05 CU-04 DHA-05

/097 W

-----014147 011242Z /45

R 311615Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8667

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4518

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SF PINT PINS

SUBJ: SCHOOL BOYCOTTS AND UNREST

1. SUMMARY: SCHOOL BOYCOTT HAS BEGUN IN EARNEST AGAIN IN PRETORIA TOWNSHIP OF ATTERIDGEVILLE AND HAS SPREAD TO OTHER PREVIOUSLY UNAFFECTED AREAS. IN ATTERIDGEVILLE AND EAST LONDON THERE HAS BEEN ACCOMPANYING DISORDERS AND ARRESTS. STUDENT LEADER SAYS BOYCOTTS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL ALL DETAINED STUDENTS ARE RELEASED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 25, THE SCHOOL BOYCOTT IN PRETORIA TOWNSHIP OF ATTERIDGEVILLE RESUMED. ON THAT EVENING DURING A "REPORT BACK" MEETING BETWEEN PARENTS AND TOWNSHIP ADVISORY BOARD OFFICIALS AT THE COMMUNITY HALL, CONFIDENTIAL

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A CROWD OF OVER 1,000 YOUTHS, ACCORDING TO EYEWITNESSES, STONED THE BUILDING AND THEN INVADED IT SMASHING FURNITURE AS THE OCCUPANTS, ALSO NUMBERING OVER 1,000, FLED. POLICE ARRIVED ON THE SCENE TO ARREST SEVERAL YOUTHS AND LEAST ONE WAS REPORTEDLY WOUNDED BY GUNFIRE. ON THE SAME DAY, THREE ATTERIDGEVILLE SCHOOLS BEGAN A BOYCOTT WHICH HAS NOW REPORTEDLY SPREAD TO ALL SCHOOLS

IN THAT TOWNSHIP. THE PRESS ESTIMATES THAT ALMOST 3,000 STUDENTS ARE NOW OUT OF SCHOOL, BUT ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES, THE NUMBER MAY BE MUCH HIGHER. UNREST HAS CONTINUED OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS WITH AT LEAST ONE SCHOOL BEING STONED AND 25 STUDENTS ARRESTED AT ANOTHER FOR INTIMIDATING OTHER STUDENTS. ONE SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRMAN HAS RESIGNED IN ATTERIDGEVILLE CITING THE "NEGATIVE ATTITUDE" OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BANTU EDUCATION.

3. SOWETO REMAINED QUIET WHILE THE BANTU ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT WENT THROUGH DIRECT TAKEOVER ROUTINE. MEANWHILE, THE BOYCOTT SPREAD TO EAST LONDON WHERE THERE HAS BEEN LOW ATTENDANCE AT TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS SINCE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK. THERE WAS AT LEAST ONE INCIDENT INVOLVING MORE THAN 200 STONE-CARRYING STUDENTS IN MDANTSANE DEMANDING THAT OTHER STUDENTS JOIN THEM IN THE BOYCOTT. POLICE USED DOGS AND BATONS TO BREAK UP THE CROWD BUT THERE WERE NO REPORTED ARRESTS OR INJURIES.

4. AN ATTERIDGEVILLE STUDENT LEADER TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE BOYCOTT WAS WELL ORGANIZED AMONG OLDER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THAT IT WOULD NOW CONTINUE UNTIL RELEASE OF STUDENTS DETAINED IN CONNECTION WITH EARLIER DISTURBANCES. HE STATED AT CONFIDENTIAL

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LEAST 30 STUDENTS WERE BEING DETAINED FROM ATTERIDGEVILLE, SOME FOR OVER A MONTH NOW WITHOUT CHARGE. THE STUDENT LEADER HIMSELF HAD JUST BEEN RELEASED FROM THE CENTRAL POLICE STATION.

5. PRESS REPORTS STATE THAT THERE IS GROWING CONCERN IN ATTERIDGEVILLE TOWNSHIPS THAT THE BOYCOTT MAY LEAD THE SAG TO DIRECT TAKEOVER OF SCHOOLS THEREBY THE BANTU AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AS IN SOWETO.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE THE HARSH REACTIONS BY OFFICIALS RECENTLY TO SOWETO BOYCOTT WHICH INCLUDED POLICE ACTION AND SCHOOL CLOSURES, STUDENTS IN ATTERIDGEVILLE ARE GOING FORWARD WITH AN EFFECTIVE BOYCOTT. AS EARLIER BOYCOTT FAIRLY QUICKLY PETERED OUT, IT'S HARD TO PREDICT HOW LONG THIS ONE MIGHT LAST. OFFICIAL REACTION SIMILAR TO THAT IN SOWETO COULD RESULT IF ATTERIDGEVILLE STUDENTS PERSIST.
BOWDLER

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Sent Date: 31-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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